

- *In tax year 2003, almost 335,000 families received the Earned Income Tax Credit to bring over \$539 million into the state.*
- *The number of families on welfare in Washington dropped 43 percent since WorkFirst began, from nearly 91,000 in 1997 to about 51,400 in October 2006.*
- *Over 169,900 parents have left welfare and stayed off.*
- *The proportion of people on welfare in Washington is at its lowest point in more than 30 years.*

Program contact:

Amber Gillum
(360) 902-7657
amber.gillum@ofm.wa.gov

For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit www.workfirst.wa.gov

What happens when WorkFirst families leave welfare?

WorkFirst is built on the goal of helping families move out of poverty by increasing their income through work. The program continues to provide services to families after they leave welfare that help parents stay employed and increase their earnings so they can become financially stable and avoid going back on welfare.

What supports are available to employed former welfare families?

- **Support services:** Available for up to six months after a family leaves welfare to pay for work expenses such as transportation and clothing costs.
- **Job search assistance and career advancement planning:** Available for up to one year after the family leaves welfare.
- **Child care:** Subsidies available through Working Connections Child Care to all working families with income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- **Tuition assistance:** Covers the cost of going to school, including tuition, books and fees. Available to all working families with income at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty level.
- **Child support:** The state keeps most of a family's child support while they are on welfare. Once a family leaves welfare, however, they receive any current child support collected on their behalf by the state.
- **Transitional Food Assistance (TFA):** Families who are receiving Basic Food at the time they leave WorkFirst are eligible for up to five months of TFA as they transition into self-sufficiency. If a family needs additional assistance after five months they may return to the regular Basic Food program.
- **Other financial supports:** Families continue to qualify for federal earned income and child tax credits based on their family size, expenses and income.
- **Medical benefits:** WorkFirst families receive Medicaid for up to one year after they leave welfare. Children qualify for Medicaid until their family's income reaches 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Parents may qualify for low-cost Basic Health Plan medical insurance after they lose their Medicaid coverage.